WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Indo-U.S. talks to allow increased access to airlines

*22. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indo-U.S. talks held recently to allow increased access to the airlines of the two countries into each other's markets, have failed to produce any tangible agreement;

(b) if so, the details of reasons leading to disagreement between the two countries; and

(c) whether another meeting is likely to be held to hammer out a solution to solve the dead-lock?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) The two rounds of bilateral discussions on Civil Aviation matters recently held between India and the United States were inconclusive; the third round is scheduled to be held from tomorrow.

Evasion of Excise Duty by Business Houses

*26. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to Refer to reply to the Starred Question No. 566 given in the Rajya Sabha on 16th May, 1995 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a shortfall in excise duty collection due to non-registration of a large number of manufacturers with the Central Excise Department;

(b) the reasons from M/s. Agra Leatheries and M/s. Luggage Home Mody No. 3, Sita Buldi, Nagpur, not being registered with the Central Excise Department in spite of being manufacturers and bulk suppliers of suitcases and its covers, since 1980;

(c) steps taken to bring the above manufacturers within the excise net work;

(d) whether Government propose to take any action to recover the due excise duty from the above manufacturers; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) to (e) No Sir, The Central Excise duty collected during 1995-96 (upto October, 1995) is Rs. 21833 crores as against Rs. 20276 crores collected during corresponding period of previous year.

It has been reported that M/s. Agra Leatherites and M/s. Luggage Home Mody No. 3, Sita Buldi, Nagpur are traders and not manufacturers of suitcases. As traders they are not required to be registered with the Central Excise department.

However, in addition to their trading activities, both the companies are engaged in stitching of covers of suitcases. While this activity amounts to manufacture, thus attracting Central Excise Law, the turnover of such stitched covers is reported to be within the exemption limit of Rs. 30 lacs and therefore, they are not required to be registered.

Posts lying vacant in public sector banks

*27. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) in how many public sector banks the posts of Chairman and Managing Director/Executive Director are lying vacant;

(b) names of those public sector banks;

(c) since how long each of the posts are lying vacant; and

(d) what are the steps taken by Government to fill-up these vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DEBIPROSAD PAL): (a) to (c) The names of public sector banks in which posts of Chairman & Managing Directors/Executive Directors are vacant and the dates from which these are vacant are given below:—

Sl. No.	Name of the Bank	Post	Date from which vacant
1.	State Bank of India	Chairman	1.9.95
2.	State Bank of India	Managing Director	1.12.93
3.	State Bank of India	Managing Director	1.10.95
4.	Indian Overseas Bank	Chairman & Managing Director	1.8.94
5.	Canara Bank	Executive Director	1.11.94
6.	Punjab National Bank	Executive Director	1.12.94
7.	Bank of Maharashtra	Executive Director	30.1.95
8.	Syndicate Bank	Executive Director	15.3.95
9.	Bank of Baroda	Executive Director	1.4.95
10.	Union Bank of India	Executive Director	1.7.95
11.	Indian Bank	Executive Director	1.11.95

(d) Necessary action has been initiated for filling up these vacancies.

Growing Fiscal Deficit

*28. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 14th November, 1995 captioned "Finance Minister for tighter control over expenditure so as to check the growing fiscal deficit of the Government;

(b) whether Government have suffered a loss of Rs. 276 crores this year alone due to the failure of the Excise Department to check fraud cases in time by certain manufacturing companies particularly the cigarette manufacturers;

(c) if so, what stern measures Government propose to take to bring to book the tax evaders, plug the loopholes in the machinery and full audit of misuse of MODVAT credit; and

(d) what are the names of 25 top tax evader companies/undertakings in the country found guilty during 1995-96 in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) to (d) Attention has been drawn to a news item in the Hindustan Times of November 14, 1995 under the caption "Finance Minister for tighter control over expenditure".

In case of exports under the Value Based Advance Licensing Scheme, some of the exporters are reported to have availed MODVAT credit irregularly to the extent of Rs. 276 Crores approx. Out of this, an amount of Rs. 181 Crores has already been reversed.

As regards Cigarette manufacturers, the department has detected a few cases of evasion during the year details of which are provided in statement-I (*see* below).